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Food and Nutrition

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Responses Invited on New School Lunch Funding Proposals

On August 13, USDA announced proposed changes in National School Lunch Regulations intended to assist States in planning the financing of their programs for the fiscal year 1972 that began July 1, 1971.

Speaking at the Silver Anniversary Convention of the 50,000-member American School Food Service Association, Assistant Secretary Richard Lyng said the regulations "will permit the placement of school lunch funds where they will be needed as the school year progresses so that we can eliminate the funding uncertainty which has created problems for all of us near the end of recent school years."

Under the proposals, special section 32 funds would be used as needed to supplement funds appropriated under the National School Lunch Act so that each State could be assured minimum Statewide average reimbursement rates for all school lunches served. The plan would assure a minimum average of 5 cents per lunch from section 4--that section of the National School Lunch Act that provides reimbursement for all lunches--and a minimum average of 30 cents more per lunch from section 11--the section relating to special assistance for lunches served free or at reduced prices.

Under the present apportionment system which takes into consideration the average per capita income of the States, many States are able to pay rates higher than the minimum and will continue to do so.

This use of the available special section 32 funds will result in a more balanced allocation of funds among all the States on the basis of the actual number of lunches to be served in fiscal 1972, and will help eliminate funding uncertainties faced by States in recent years as they worked to bring more schools and more children into the program. Section 32 funds are a permanent annual appropriation to USDA, based upon a percentage of U.S. custom receipts.

Within available funds and maximum authorized rates of assistance, States will continue to be able to vary both section 4 and section 11 rates of reimbursement to individual schools based upon relative need. It will no longer be necessary, under the proposed regulations, to assign a section 4 reimbursement rate of 12 cents to a school in order to assign a section 11 rate of more than 30 cents.

Under the proposed regulations, a reserve of \$4.5 million of section 32 funds would continue to be made avail-

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able in 1972 for Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, and American Samoa for section 11 purposes.

The revisions also will place increased emphasis on directing nonfood assistance funds to needy "no program" schools that lack equipment and facilities, by requiring State agencies to reserve 50 percent of these funds for such schools.

The portion of the regulations dealing with alternate methods of making eligibility determinations of needy children for free or reduced price lunches would be amended to clarify that special cash assistance reimbursement cannot be authorized for all lunches served in a participating school unless a reasonable basis exists for a finding that all the children in the school are needy.

The proposed changes appeared in the Federal Register on Friday, August 13, 1971. Comments, suggestions, or objections are invited and may be delivered within 15 days of that date or submitted by mail postmarked not later than August 28 to Herbert D. Rorex, Director, Child Nutrition Division, Food and Nutrition Service, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250. Comments received will be open to public inspection. ☐

SCHOOL LUNCH MATCHING REGULATIONS REVISED

On July 30, USDA announced a revision of its regulations which govern the amounts of "matching funds" that States must put into the National School Lunch Program.

The revision implements a provision of Public Law 91-248, which amended the National School Lunch Act.

This amendment provides that State funds must make up a prescribed portion of the required matching. Federal cash support provided under Section 4 of the National School Lunch Act had to be matched on a 3 to 1 basis by funds from sources within the State. (That is 3 dollars from within the State for every Federal dollar).

In some States this matching requirement was formerly met entirely by local funds and the amounts children pay for their lunches. But starting this month, 4 percent of the matching required must come from funds appropriated or otherwise made available by the State. ☐



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FNS ON MOVE TO IMPLEMENT NEW FOOD STAMP LEGISLATION

USDA's Food and Nutrition Service is on the move in implementing the new food stamp legislation (P.L.91-671) approved January 11th by President Nixon.

Assistant Secretary Richard Lyng says the new legislation provides the principal food stamp reforms requested by the Administration, including uniform national eligibility standards, provisions for free stamps for the very poor, maximum charge to other participants not to exceed 30 percent of their income, and authorization for eligible families to buy less than their full stamp allotment.

In its major features, the new food stamp law:

- Extends the authority for program appropriations through Fiscal Year 1973. A maximum appropriation of \$1.75 billion is authorized for the current fiscal year (ending June 30, 1971), with no limitations set on amounts that may be appropriated for Fiscal Years 1972 and 1973.
- Provides for the establishment of uniform national eligibility standards, eliminating the inequitable State-to-State variations in eligibility rules.
- Provides a stamp allotment sufficient to purchase a nutritionally adequate diet.
- Authorizes free stamps for those with little or no income.

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CASH AND FOOD AID TO CHILD NUTRITION TOPS \$1 BILLION

More than \$1 billion in Federal funds and foods is helping to bolster nutrition of the Nation's children in the current fiscal year, ending June 30, 1971.

The total of \$1.029 billion is 25 percent more than the \$754 million that went into the child nutrition programs last year.

The cash apportionment of child nutrition funds to the 50 States, District of Columbia, and 5 territories totals nearly \$725,000,000 compared with \$447,126,810 last year. USDA foods being donated to the States for child feeding programs this year are valued at more than \$304 million.

Most of the extra cash is to assist States in providing free or reduced-price meals to needy children in cooperative Federal-State-local child feeding programs. A total of \$359,400,000 -- or more than 2-1/2 times the amount allotted last year -- has been apportioned to the States specifically to help feed needy youngsters.

For the first time, a part of the funds will be budgeted for developmental projects for the programs, and for nutrition education and training. This provision was included in the new legislation (P.L.91-248) signed by President Nixon last May, amending

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FOOD STAMPS

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- Provides that all other eligible families will receive their stamp allotment for a charge not exceeding 30 percent of their income.
- Calls for revised definitions of a "household" as a group of "related" individuals.
- Requires able-bodied persons between 18 and 65 years of age -- excepting persons caring for dependent children, "bona fide" students, and people working at least 30 hours per week -- to register for and accept employment at applicable Federal or State wage rates.
- Provides for the value of the food stamp allotment to be reviewed annually, to take account of changes in retail food prices.
- Permits eligible families to buy less than their full stamp allotment, thereby adding flexibility to the program.
- Permits elderly persons to spend their food stamps to purchase meals delivered to their homes by nonprofit agencies.
- Facilitates the participation of welfare families by permitting them to purchase food stamps by a "check-off" from their welfare grant.
- Requires the States to undertake "Outreach" efforts to acquaint eligible families with the Food Stamp Program, and authorizes Federal sharing of the costs involved.
- Provides a "fair hearing" procedure for aggrieved program participants.

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- Authorizes concurrent distribution of food stamps and donated commodities in areas requesting both programs.

Following the precedent set in implementing school lunch and child nutrition legislation last year, the Food and Nutrition Service will publish food stamp regulations and invite comments on them. April 15 has been set as a target date for publication of the proposals in the Federal Register, to allow time for necessary consultations with other Federal departments over the next several weeks to insure coordination and compatibility of key policies with related Federal programs.

In addition to publishing the proposed regulations, USDA will issue new schedules establishing the cost of food stamps to participants.

CHILD NUTRITION

(Continued from page one)

the National School Lunch and the Child Nutrition Acts. An amount of \$750,000 is set aside for nutrition education and training, and another \$750,000 reserved to assist in financing developmental projects.

The apportionment includes:

\$224,250,000 cash assistance for on-going lunch service authorized by Section 4 of the National School Lunch Act. This is an increase of \$56,209,000 over last year. In addition to the Federal funds and foods, support for these lunches comes from State and local sources -- and from the amounts that children pay for their lunches.

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\$204,747,000 for cash aid to reimburse schools for free or reduced price lunches to needy children, under Section 11 of the National School Lunch Act. This is up \$159,947,000 from a year ago.

\$154,653,000 additionally is available to help States provide for needy children, from Section 32. This is one-third higher than the \$97,000,000 last year.

Under the new legislation, any school is eligible for special cash assistance to meet the need for free and reduced-price meals, and such special assistance is no longer limited to only the food costs of a lunch program. Section 32 funds can also be used in the breakfast and non-food assistance programs.

\$12,000,000 for food assistance in the School Breakfast Program, largely in schools in needy areas. These funds are for the local purchase of foods, with funds from local sources meeting the cost of preparing and serving the breakfasts. This is up \$2 million from last year.

\$15,000,000 for reimbursing up to 75 percent of the cost of obtaining equipment for needy schools for the initiation, expansion or improvement of lunch or breakfast programs.

Half of this amount is apportioned to States on the basis of the number of children enrolled in schools that do not now have food service. The balance goes to States on the same basis as under the general assistance funds for the School Lunch Program. This amount is up \$5 million from a year ago.

more/ child nutrition, from col. 1

\$12,000,000 for Special Food Service Program for Children in day-care and recreation centers and other non-school situations -- a decrease of \$3 million.

\$102,280,860 to help pay the cost of milk served to children by schools and child care organizations -- approximately what it was a year ago.

The Food and Nutrition Service is also donating food valued at \$240,400,000 to the States for their use in all food service programs for children. In addition, schools participating in the National School Lunch Program get the added benefits of \$64,300,000 of foods that are bought by the Agriculture Department especially to help meet the nutritional requirements of school lunches, under Section 6 of the National School Lunch Act.

A State-by-State breakdown of the apportionment of these child nutrition funds is available from the Information Division, FNS, USDA, Washington, D. C. 20250.

FOOD PROGRAM STATISTICS FOR NOVEMBER

Food Stamps:

People participating . . . 9,300,000
Value of bonus coupons \$124,600,000

Commodity Distribution:

People participating . . . 3,600,000
Cost of food distributed \$22,000,000

School Lunch:

Schools participating . . . 77,538
Children participating . 23,700,000
Needy children reached

with free and

reduced-price meals . 5,800,000

FAMILY FOOD PROGRAMS AT JANUARY 15th
Programs operating . 3,097 counties
Programs planned. . . . 22 counties
No programs 10 counties

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A STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

"We have made great strides in improving the incomes and nutrition of millions of Americans," President Nixon said today.

"One year ago, I convened a White House Conference on Food, Nutrition and Health. I promised the participants that we would review what had actually been accomplished a year later.

"The Nutrition Subcommittee of the Domestic Council has prepared a Summary Report of major achievements during this time, and they make an impressive record indeed."

The President enumerated the big gains in numbers of people helped by the Food Stamp Program, in monthly expenditures on food stamps, and in geographic coverage of family food programs. Free food stamps, he said, will soon be provided to the very poorest families.

He noted also the big gains in feeding of needy children as a result of greatly increased funds for child feeding, particularly for feeding needy children.

"Those who administer our food and nutrition programs can be

justly proud of the accomplishments described in this Summary Report," he said.

"But this is no time to sit back or to ease off in our efforts. The programs which are now operating must be made to operate even more effectively. More importantly, we must remember that the key to better nutrition in the long run is to provide sufficient income to purchase adequate diets and to meet the other basic day-to-day needs.

"I urge those who will participate in the follow-up Conference on Food, Nutrition and Health to study this Summary Report to assist them in evaluating the original recommendations and in gauging our progress in this vital area of national policy."

Copies of the Summary Report have been mailed to all participants in the White House Conference. Copies of it -- "Summary Report/White House Conference on Food, Nutrition and Health" -- are also available from: Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402, for 25 cents each.